

FOLKLORE

A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN FOLKLORE

VOLUME VI, ISSUES 4 & 5

APRIL - MAY



NEW YORK, N.Y.



PROMENADE

Official organ of the American Square Dance Group.....

"Promenade" is published monthly with one special summer issue.

SUBSCRIPTION.....\$1.00 yearly
Single mailed copy.....20¢

"The purpose of the American Square Dance Group is to make available those rich stores of native dance, music, drama and general Americana which together comprise American folk culture; to conduct such activities without regard for race, creed, color or social position; to cooperate with those who hold similar views."
Constitution of the A. S. D. G.

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c/o Mayo.....(MO 2-6114)

There was this old marster who never gave his negroes nothing to eat and so the slaves uster steal his food. one day it would be a sheep or maybe a hog. And the old marster missed his sheeps and his hogs and decided it was time to do somethin' about it. So he called his houseboy and said to him, "John," he said, "I'm going to Philadelphia for three long weeks, and you are going to be in charge of everything in the house." And he called his headman and said to him, "I'm going to Philadelphia for three long weeks, and you will be in charge of all the farm."

Then he calls John and has him drive him to the station and John sees him get on the train. The news flies all over the countryside, you know how news like that would fly, that old marster done gone to Philendolph (they couldn't say Philadelphia, you know) for free (you know, three) long weeks. And everybody is rejoicing.

That night the slavery people took a lot of food from the marster's cellar, hard cider and food and sheep and hogs, and they went down to this old, large log cabin where they cooked the food they had stolen. All but one colored woman who sat in the corner just a-knittin' and a-smokin' her pipe and not paying any attention to the others.

But old marster, he'd fixed it up some way and had got off the train at the next town, and put on old clothes and old shoes, all cut up, you know the way the old slaves used to wear them, and had burnt-corked his face and stained his arms and legs.

That night he stood by the fence, a-whittlin' and chewin' tobacco and all the negroes came to the log house to cook the food, and they all looked at him and said "There's a new nigger out there. Must'a run away from some place." But they went on in and started eatin' and drinkin'. All but this old woman who just sits knittin' and smokin' and not eatin'.

And purty soon the "new nigger" knocks at the door and says "I'm so-and-so and I done run away from such and such a plantation (naming a place they all knew) and I'm hungry. Kin I come in?" And some of the negroes say no, "we don't want any strange niggers around here." And some say, "oh, let 'im come in." But the old marster fell through the door onto the floor saying, "I'm sick and I'm hungry. So they picked him up and brought him in and fixed him all up nice. And he says, "hummm, I see you have food!" And they laugh and say, "sure, we got it from the old marster," and he tasted the cider and says, "It's pretty good." and they all laugh and start doin' the 4-handed Virginia reel and singin'

"everybody dance and sing
And everybody swing
Old Marster's gone to Philendolph
For free long weeks."

And they all dance, and the old marster dance along with 'em, and he swings all the pretty girls and takes one on his knee and starts playing with her there in
(continued on next page)

front of the fireplace. And the old woman just sits off in the corner, a-knit-tin' and a-smokin' and not sayin' anything. But purty soon she calls over one and says (in a whisper, behind her hand) "Don't that look like old marster? Look like his hands. Look like his feet and he dances just like old marster." And everybody say, "Go on. You crazy." And they all dance and sing.

"Everybody dance and sing
And everybody swing.
Old marster gone to Philendelph
For free long, long weeks."

And the old woman get up and say she don't want to be mixed up in it and she don't want to get a beating. She don't eat nothing, but just goes off into the next room and go to bed. And long about three or four they all go to bed and the old marster right along with 'em.

The next morning they all go about doing their work just like nothing happen and old marster he call all of 'em into the dining room, all of 'em who had been eating and drinking the night before. And he has on his old ragged clothes. But he wash his face and hands. And he says, "You see the old marster? Well dance and swing (wham goes his long whip) dance and swing (wham) cause old marster done gone to Philendelph for free long, long weeks (wham) and he beat 'em all up.

All but the old woman.

(Virgie said she got this story from Madam Sue, who lives in Bridgeport, and is about 78 years old. She's a white woman got ten kids, all colored. She hates white men. Somebody musta done something to her long years ago. And all them colored kids is by a different man. But, everybody love Madam Sue and she knows it. And they pet her and she's only about so high and can keep you in stitches. Oh, everyone loves Madam Sue and she says so)

Another one of her stories is about a colored man who always know everything. No matter what his old marster ask him he always know the answer. So the old marster get suspicious of him and decides he'll really find out if John really knows everything. So one night they all go coon huntin' (you know, in the old days they used to call negroes coon?) and all the men but John and a few go coon huntin' in the woods. And they catch a coon and put him in a bag, and tie it up and leave it there on the road. And old marster call all the men together and say, "I'm

gonna find out if John really knows everything or if he's just foolin' me, and I'm gonna find out right here in front of all you men." So he sends for John and says, "Now, John, I'm gonna ask you a question right here in front of all these men and I want you to give me the answer, and I want you to tell me the truth. Where were you last night?" And John says "In the barn asleep" and he names all themen who were sleepin' in the barn and they all say yes, that's where he was. That was 'cause the old marster want to know he wasn't in the woods seein' 'em hunt. "Now John, I want you to tell me what's in that bag. If you don't tell me the truth, I'm going to beat the living daylights out of you." And John scratch his head, and look at the bag for a long time. Then he spit (this was all pantomime) in his hand and smash the other hand down on it. He did this three time and then say. "Old marster, you got this old coon this time" (you know, they called colored folks coons and John meant that he didn't know what was in the bag, but the old marster thought he meant the raccoon and that was all that saved him from a beating.)

Old marster say, "Why did you do that?" But John just say, "I won't tell you that."

A certain day, I think it was in May, when everybody used to have their fortunes told. And there was this fine young colored man. All the girls were crazy about him, he was so good lookin and tall. And he had him a fine colored girl and they was gonna get married. So he went to have his fortune told and when he came out he was crying and holding his side. And they all asked him why, and he said that the old woman had told him that he had three months, three days, and three hours to live, And he was such a fine young man, and all, they didn't know what to do. And he goes and tells his girl goodbye. And on the day before he supposed to die, they all hold a prayer meeting in the church for him and he's there laughing and shaking hands with everybody and tellin them all goodbye. Then he goes home and goes to bed. The next morning when his mother go to call him, she find him dead in bed. Just like the fortune-teller had said. And after that they all stopped having their fortunes read."

Collected Feb. 1946 from Mrs. Virgie Thomas, N.Y., by Margot Mayo.

SAMSONVILLE LANCERS

Samsonville is a ghost town, a skeleton hamlet set well off the usual trails and highways of the Catskill Mountains. In the roaring days of the last century, when traffic was heavy and canals, railroads and ships were busy transporting manufactured materials, Samsonville was a flourishing town. The main occupation of the inhabitants was the tanning industry, for the bark of the fine Catskill trees made the site ideal for tanneries. The remains of the tanning vats and the stone walls of the tannery may still be seen among the tall grasses that have overgrown much of the town. The few families that remain faithful to the old town live mostly on the well kept farms near the little ghost town.

During the summers of 1939 and 1940, Margot and some of the other councilors at Camp Woodland frequently visited Samsonville and made friends with George Van Kleek; farmer, blacksmith, and square dance caller. The following dance is a variation of the traditional Lancers, as called by George Van Kleek. The tune is one he played on his accordion for the dance.

Formation: square sets

Music: Samsonville Lancers

- Calls: 1) Honor your partners, honor your corners and all circle left.
2) Head couples promenade inside the set.
3) Other couples fill in.
4) All chassez to the right.
All chassez to the left.
5) Cast off, ladies to the right and gents to the left.
6) Form your lines and all forward and back.
7) Forward again with right hand across and left hand back.
8) Forward and swing your partners to place.

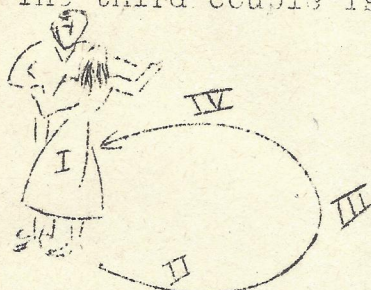
Chorus: Allemande left and grand chain around. Meet your partners and promenade home.

Description: The promenade, in Samsonville, is a dance promenade, a polka in closed ball room position, performed with the usual hopping associated with the polka.

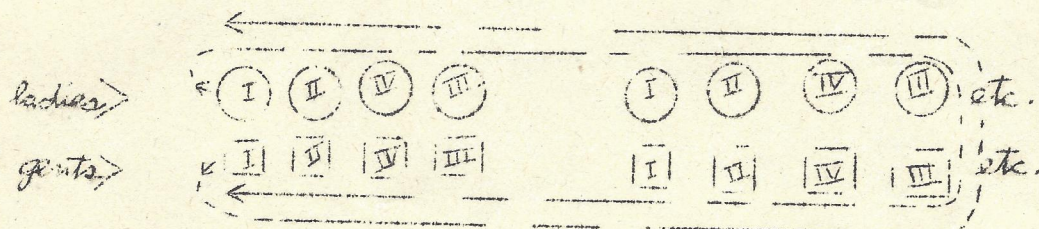
- 1) Bow to your partners, to your corner and all join hands and move around the set to the left until all are in their original places.
- 2) The head couple promenades counter clockwise inside the set ending in the first couples original position, and facing the outside of the set, with their backs to the center. The woman remains on the right of the gentleman.

SAMSONVILLE LANCERS (continued)

- 3) The second couple moves into the center of the set and stands between the first couple, the second lady remaining on the right of her partner. The fourth couple moves into the set and stands behind the second couple, the fourth lady on the right of her partner. The third couple is already in line.



- 4) All partners join hands in skating position, and all couples slide four steps to their right, and four back to their left.
- 5) The first lady moves to her right and moves down the room, followed by all the ladies in the set. The first gent turns to his left and moves down the room, followed by all the gents in the set. If more than one set is dancing, the other sets in the room can be so arranged that during figure three, all the dancers form two long lines down the room. Then all the ladies will follow the first lady as she leads the line around, and all the gents will follow the first gent. The first lady and her partner meet at the foot of the room and pass, with the ladies passing in front of the gents. The first lady leads her line back up the room, until she is in her original place, and the first gent is in his original place.

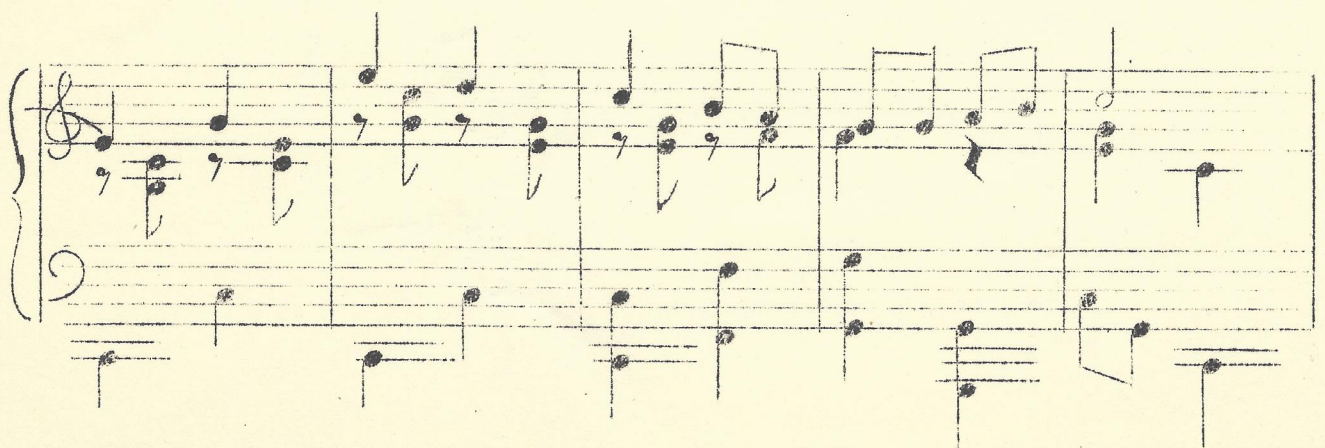
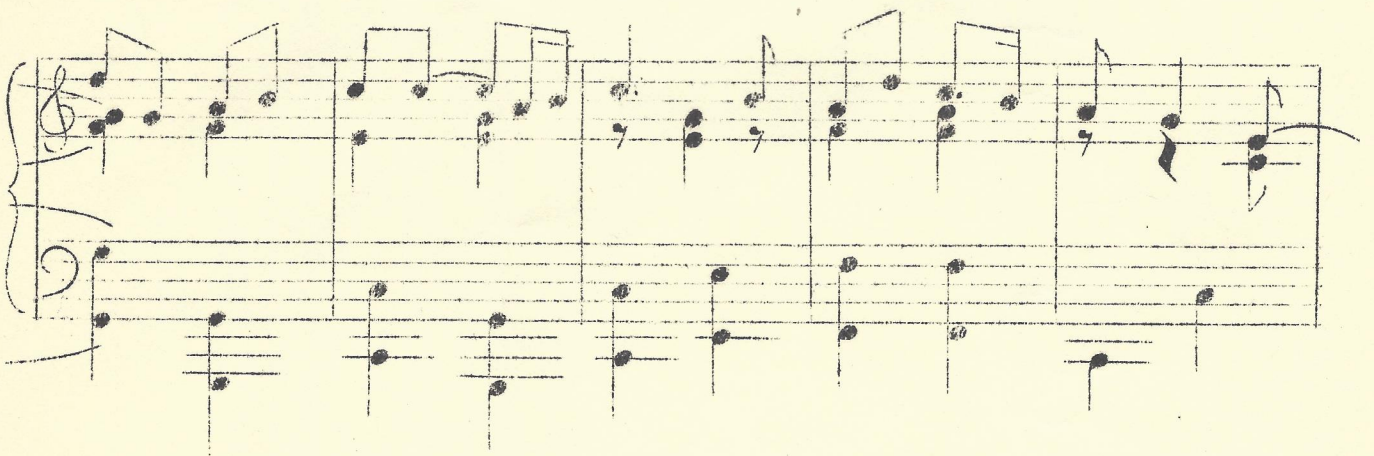
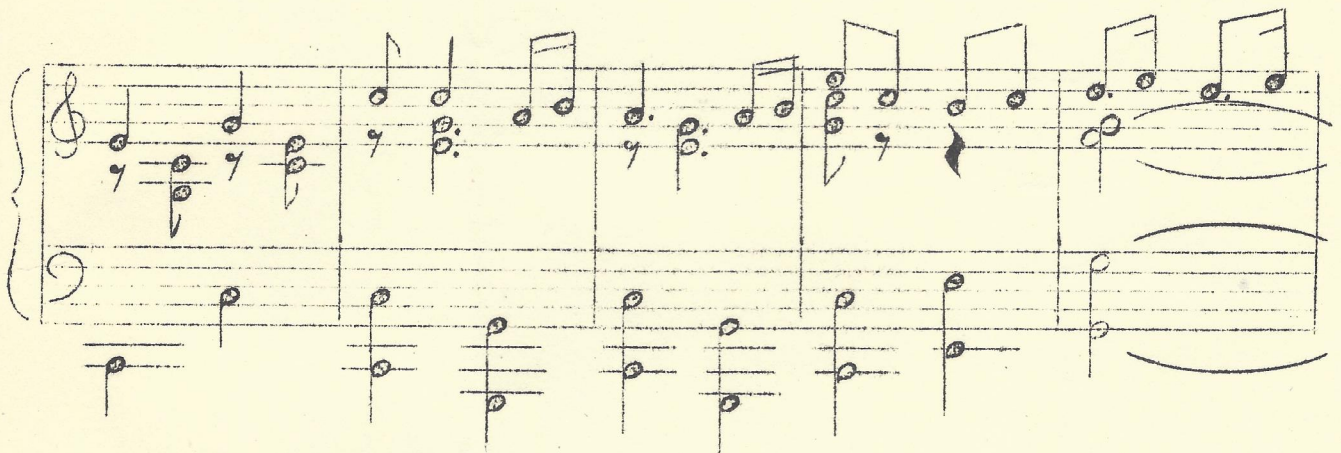
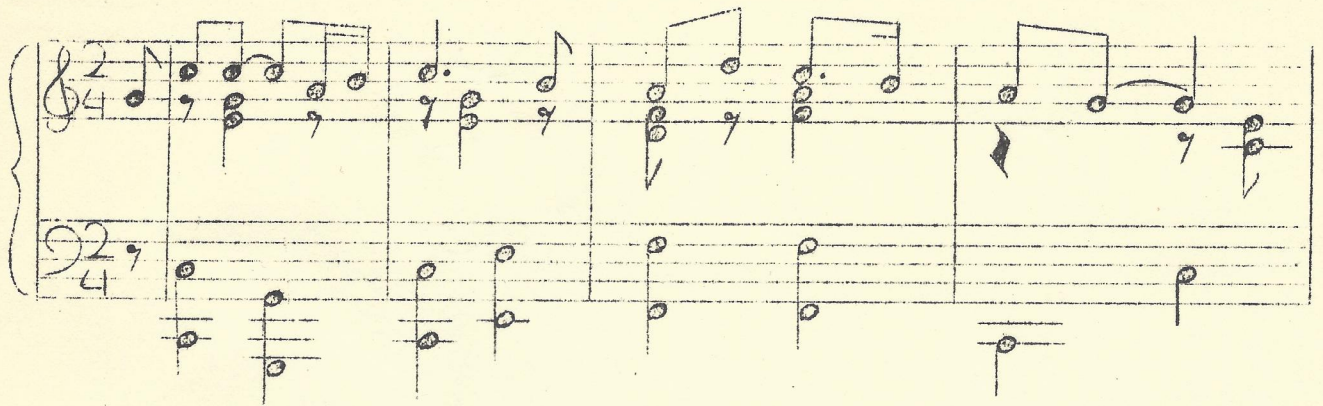


- 6) All the dancers in each line join hands and the two lines move four steps forward (toward each other) and four backward.
- 7) Both lines move forward again; the dancers drop hands and each gent swings his own partner into his original place in his original set.

Chorus: Each gent faces his corner, turns her with a left-hand turn. Partners face, join right hands and pass, giving right and left hands alternately to dancers approaching them. When the partners meet at the opposite side of the set, they dance promenade til they reach their original place.

NOTE: When the side couples promenade in 2) the remaining part of the dance must be performed within the original sets. The long lines are formed only when the first and third couples are active.

SAMSONVILLE LANCIERS



JOHN PLAYFORD, HIS TIMES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

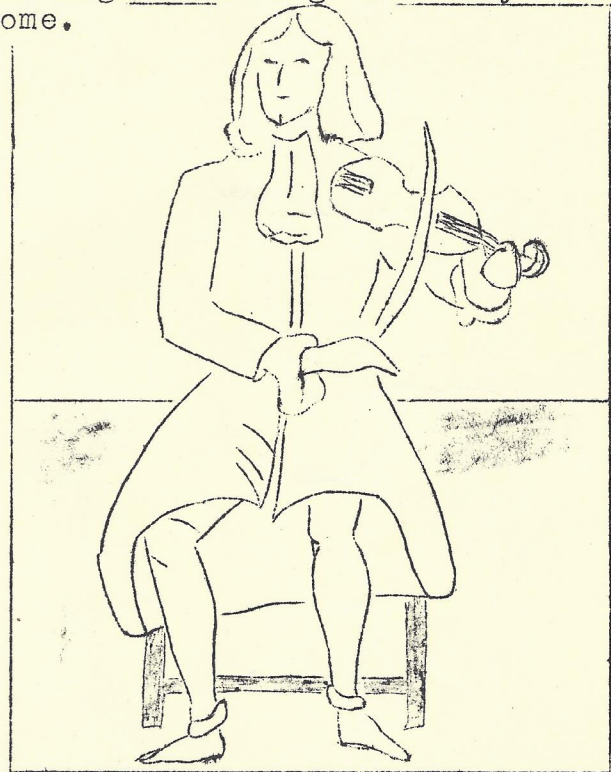
by Bob Trotta

Today it is possible for the student of folklore to trace many of the early English ballads down to the present time. This is in no small measure due to the work of preservation by John Playford. Through his efforts alone the popular ballads (and even some of the serious music and poetry) of the 16th and 17th centuries have come down to us entirely intact.



John Playford lived through one of the most unsettled eras in English history. He was born in 1623 and by the time he published the first edition of *The English Dancing Master* in 1650, Charles I had been executed and Cromwell had been acknowledged as the principle figure in England. The austere life under the Commonwealth caused Playford and his royalist friends some discomfort, aside from the

fact that music was generally frowned upon and even forbidden in churches at the time. Despite this Playford published a tremendous quantity of music, openly defiant of the Cromwell puritans. However, 'Honest John' never lacked friends and his only enemies were rival publishers who disturbed his virtual monopoly in music publishing only in later years. Among Playford's many friends was Samuel Pepys, of diary fame. On one occasion Pepys spent the entire time walking from Greenwich to Woolwich reading Playford's new handbook on theory called *A Brief Introduction to the Skill of Musick* (1654), and on still another occasion he became so absorbed in Playford's collection of books that he spent the night reading at Playford's home.



Playford's bookshop and dwelling place was situated "in the Inner Temple neere the church doore" of the Temple Church where he held the position of parish

(continued on next page)

clerk. His duties consisted of leading the musical activities of the church, a high position at the Church, although in a smaller and poorer community the parish clerk was usually a general handyman who incidentally led the psalm singing every Sunday (It wasn't unusual for a parish clerk to spend his evenings in the tavern where he directed boisterous drinking songs.) The shop itself was a curious combination which dealt in books, music and music supplies, drugs of all kinds, and even liquors.

The first edition of the Dancing Master contained 104 unbarred tunes, and the introduction bore this message: "....(They)....commend it (the Art of Dancing) to be exeellent for Recreation after more serious studies, making the body active and strong, graceful in deportment and a quality very much becoming a Gentleman." By 1665 all the tunes had been barred, put into the proper G-clef (there was no differentiation between the G- and F-clefs, either being used when needed with no change in sign), and more tunes were added. The seventh edition in 1686 contained 208 tunes and 32 dances.

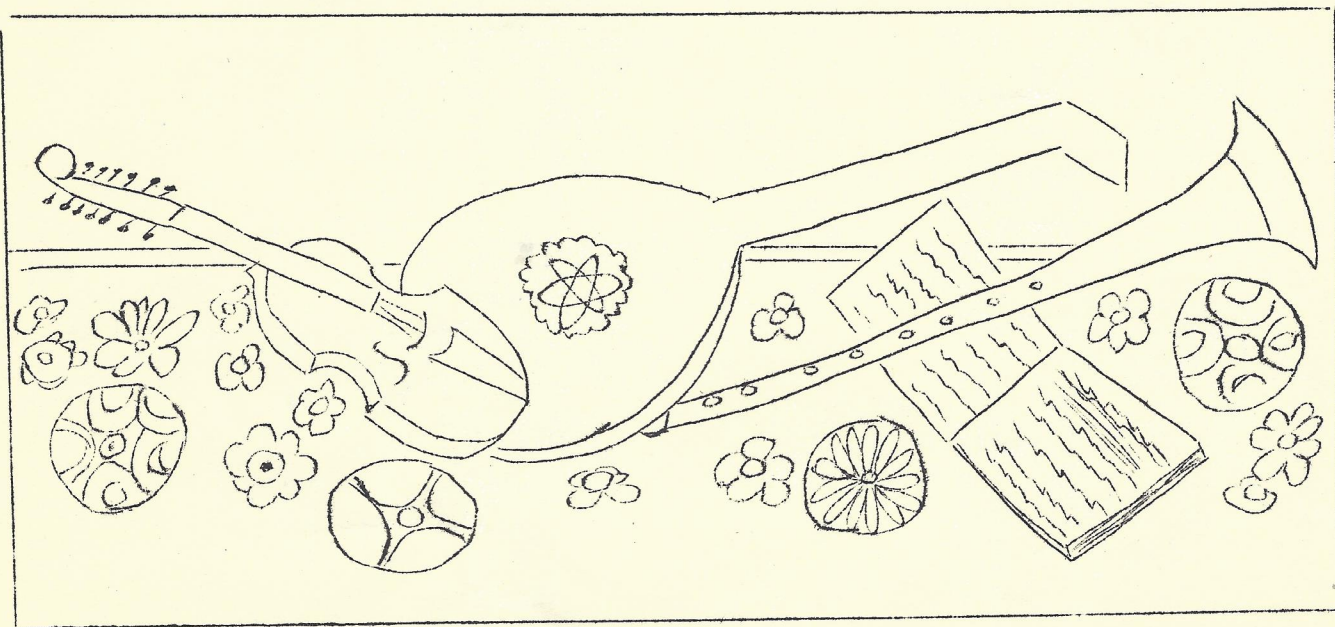
All of this material was popular at the time and came from either folk sources or from composers of that period, who them-

selves borrowed freely from the people's songs. John Playford gathered the music of the 16th and 17th centuries, with 18th century material in editions printed long after his death. These editions were still being published three quarters of a century after Playford's death.

In one way Playford was rather lucky because as late as 1614, only four decades earlier, the monarch of England still had the right to grant monopoly patents to one or a few persons for the use of the printing press and the importation of printed material. This law in the hands of the puritanical Commonwealth government would have stopped Playford's efforts almost entirely. As it was, he had to overcome the inertia of little or no music publishing during the half century after Queen Elizabeth's death. Elizabeth's reign saw the importation of much Italian music, which continued to be so popular that it appeared very often in Playford's books.

Another of Playford's books, The Treasury of Musick, contained the poems of Waller, Lovelace, Quarles, Herrick and many other outstanding figures in 17th century literature, set to music by some of the best musicians of that era.

(continued in next issue)



CHASE THE SQUIRREL

The following dance was collected by Margot at a square dance held in a roadhouse near Quarryville, New York. It is obviously a variation of the "Running Set" figure, and is danced in a circle, as is the Southern dance. The tunes played by the little orchestra were mostly of Irish origin, jigs, reels, and hornpipes, so we suggest you use an Irish tune for this dance.

Formation: an even number of couples in a circle. Partners standing side by side, facing the center of the circle.

Music: any lively jig or reel tune.

CALLS: 1) All circle left.

2) Active couples out to the right
Lady 'round the lady and the gent 'round the gent.
Gent 'round the lady and the lady 'round the gent.

3) Four hands half round and half right and left on.

Chorus: Allemande left and promenade. The final chorus of each dance at Quarryville was " Allemande left, grand right and left, meet your partner and promenade home. "

Description: 1) All the dancers join hands and circle once around to the left, until all are in original positions in the circle.

2) The active couples are the couples numbered 1, 4, 7, etc. These couples move to the next couple on the right of them. Couple one will dance with couple two, couple four with couple five, and so on. The active lady moves between the dancers of the inactive couple, and around behind the inactive lady, and back in front of the inactive lady. The active gent moves between the dancers of the inactive couple, around behind the inactive gent and back in front of him. The active lady steps in front of her partner and moves between the dancers of inactive couple, around behind the inactive gent and back in front of him. The active gent, meanwhile, moves between the dancers of the inactive couple, around behind the inactive lady and back in front of her.

3) The active and inactive couples who are dancing together join hands and move around to the left, exchanging their places. Both couples perform a half right and left by advancing and passing each other, with the ladies moving between the gents. The active couple moves on to the next inactive couple on the right, while the inactive couple just dancing finishes the figure by joining nearest hands and turning into place, the gent moving backward and the lady forward.

Note: When each original active couple is back in its original place, the chorus is danced. Then the couple to the right of each original active couple becomes active and the dance is repeated until each couple has been active. Then the final chorus is performed.

An additional call for 2) is:

"Chase that rabbit, chase that squirrel
Chase that pretty gal 'round the world."

CAPTAIN KEELER

This is a good tune for any lively square dance!

